

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14883

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG
SUBJECT: WAFDISTS CONTINUE PREPARATIONS

REF: CAIRO 14315

SUMMARY: WAFD LEADERS REPORTEDLY GOING FORWARD WITH PLANS
ESTABLISH NEW PARTY DESPITE GOVERNMENT OP-
POSITION. THEY CLAIM HAVE ENOUGH MP'S TO DO SO, BUT
ADMIT SUPPORTERS UNDER PRESSURE. NEWSPAPER WILL BE
ESTABLISHED. EDITORIAL PLAY ON WAFD MOSTLY
NEGATIVE, BUT MUSAAWAR POINTS OUT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN
SADAT'S ADVOCACY OF DEMOCRACY AND BANNING POLITICAL
PARTY. DEBATE THUS FAR REFLECTS POLITICAL VACUUM IN
EGYPT WHICH SADAT'S OFFICIAL CENTER PARTY HAS FAILED FILL.
END SUMMARY.

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF, WHO HAS HAD EXTENSIVE RECENT CONTACT
WTH LEADING MEMBERS OF INCIPIENT WAFD, TELLS US SARAG
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AL-DIN AND HIS ASSOCIATES HAVE NOT BEEN COWED BY PRESIDENT
SADAT, PM SALIM AND GUIDED EDITORIAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST
PARTY'S REBIRTH. INSTEAD, WAFDISTS REPORTEDLY ARE BUSY
DRAFTING PROGRAM WHICH THEY FEEL WILL BE ABOVE LEGAL
CHALLENGE. THEY ARE EXPECTED SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR
PARTY'S LEGALIZATION WITHIN MONTH.

2. WAFDISTS REPORTEDLY CLAIM THEY HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH MEMBERS PEOPLES ASSEMBLY TO CONFORM WITH PARTIES LAW STIPULATIONS. THEY ADMIT GOE PRESSURE HAS THINNED THEIR RANKS, BUT INSIST THAT ENOUGH REMAIN IN FOLD TO LAUNCH NEW WAFD. (FACT THAT THEY REFUSE TO BE PRECISE ON NUMBER OF ASSEMBLY ADHERENTS PROBABLY INDICATES CONCERN THAT MORE WILL WAVER.)

3. WAFDISTS CONFESS THEY DO NOT YET HAVE FUNDS TO LAUNCH NEWSPAPER BUT INSIST THIS WILL NOT POSE MAJOR PROBLEM. ONCE PARTY LEGALLY ACCEPTED, AND PRESS LAW PASSED, THEY ANTICIPATE NO DIFFICULTY IN RAISING REQUISITE FUNDS FROM PARTY SUPPORTERS. THEY CLAIM "THOUSANDS" ALREADY HAVE SENT UNSOLICITED MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEFRAY PARTY EXPENSES.

4. MOST EDITORIAL PLAY CONTINUES NEGATIVE ON POSSIBLE WAFD REBIRTH. MOST ACERBIC COMMENTS HAVE APPEARED IN AKHBAR, UNDER SIGNATURE PAPER'S CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR MOUSA SABRI. SABRI REPEATEDLY DEPICTED SARAG AL-DIN AS FEUDAL PASHA WHOSE LAVISH STYLE OF LIVING SUPPORTED BY UNLAWFULLY EARNED WEALTH ACCUMULATED AT EXPENSE LANDLESS PEASANTS. WAFD, SABRI MAINTAINED, HAS NO PLACE IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY EGYPT.

5. WEEKLY MUSAABAR, SEPTEMBER 2, CONTAINED ONLY COMMENTARY EXPLICITLY SUPPORTIVE OF WAFDIST INTENTIONS (ALTHOUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS BURIED ON PAGE 11). ARTICLE CRITICIZED STRONGLY THOSE WHO STATE PURBLCY UNWILLINGNESS PERMIT FORMATION OF NEW PARTY. ANYONE DOING THIS, MUSAABAR SAID, IS "ABORTING DEMOCRACY WHICH SADAT IS TRYING TO ESTABLISH". (PAPER OMITTS MENTION OF FACT THAT SADAT, HIMSELF, OPPOSES WAFD REBRITH). MUSAABAR NOTED WAFDISTS HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR LOYALTY TO EGYPT, TO SADAT AND TO CORRECTIVE REVOLUTION, THEREBY DEMONSTRATING THEY NOT ENEMIES OF STATE. IN ANY CASE, MUSAABAR MAINTAINED, THOSE OBJECTING TO WAFD REBIRTH HAVE NO RIGHT TO GRANT OR WITHHOLD SUCH PERMISSION.

6. COMMENT: SADAT'S DILEMMA IS HOW TO RESTRAIN WAFD AND NOT APPEAR ARBITRARY OR ACTING OUTSIDE CONSTITUTIONAL/LEGAL FRAMEWORK HE HIMSELF HAS ESTABLISHED. THIS WILL PROVE DIFFICULT SINCE WAFD GIVES EVERY IMPRESSION OF INTENDING FORCE THE ISSUE. DEGREE OF INTEREST WAFD RE-EMERGENCE HAS SPARKED, EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE GROWN TO MATURITY SINCE PARTY LAST APPEARED ON EGYPT'S POLITICAL STAGE 25 YEARS AGO, IS STRIKING. WHILE THIS DUE PARTLY TO NOSTALGIA IT IS MORE IMPORTANTLY REFLECTION OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP VACUUM WHICH WAFDISTS ATTEMPTING

FILL. SADAT'S OFFICIAL CENTER PARTY HAS NEITHER ACHIEVED
LEGITIMACY NOR ARTICULATED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY.
SHOULD WAFD BE REESTABLISHED, CHANCES ARE GOVERNMENT'S CENTER
PARTY HEADED BY PRIMIN MAMDOUH SALIM WOULD SUFFER LARGE SCALE
DEFECTIONS.
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